



Substitute Senate Bill No. 872

Public Act No. 07-162

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD, A STATE BUILDING CODE FOR AGRICULTURE, AND ZONING REGULATION OF FARMING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2007*) (a) There is established a Farmland Preservation Advisory Board, within the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes only, to assist and advise the Commissioner of Agriculture in carrying out the provisions of sections 22-26aa to 22-26kk, inclusive, of the general statutes.

(b) The advisory board shall consist of twelve members as follows: A representative from The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service, appointed by the Governor to serve an initial term of two years; a representative from the Connecticut Farm Bureau, who may be an owner and operator of a Connecticut farm and shall be appointed by the Governor to serve an initial term of three years; five owners and operators of Connecticut farms, who shall be appointed as follows: One by the Governor, one by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one by the majority leader of the Senate, and one by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, to serve initial terms of three years; a representative from the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station,

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appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, to serve an initial term of two years; a representative from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, to serve an initial term of two years; a representative from an organization whose mission includes farmland preservation, who may be an owner and operator of a Connecticut farm and who shall be appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate to serve an initial term of two years; a representative from an organization whose mission includes food security, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives to serve an initial term of two years; and a representative from a financial lending organization whose clients include owners and operators of Connecticut farms, appointed by the Governor to serve an initial term of two years. The members of the board shall select a chairperson from among the board members who are owners and operators of Connecticut farms. Upon the expiration of the terms of the initial members, the terms of such members shall be three years. A person appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of such vacancy. Any member may be eligible for reappointment.

(c) Upon establishment of the advisory board and selection of a chairperson pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the board: (1) Shall meet publicly with said commissioner and the staff of the purchase of development rights for agricultural land program within the Department of Agriculture, not later than October 1, 2007, and at least quarterly thereafter to review the ongoing activities of the program, (2) shall evaluate and provide comments and recommendations on the purchase of development rights for agricultural land transaction process, including, but not limited to, methods for streamlining the process and appropriate levels of staffing and funding, methods for increased participation by municipalities and farmers, methods of planning for future acquisitions and identifying prime land for agricultural preservation, and outreach

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strategies to be conducted by program staff to the state-wide farming community, targeted towards attracting a greater number of quality applications, (3) may recommend any other changes to the program deemed appropriate by the board, including recommendations for future legislative action, and (4) shall evaluate and provide comments on the efficacy of the method of bond funding established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2007*) Notwithstanding section 3-20 of the general statutes, to the extent there is a sufficient balance of bonds approved by the General Assembly pursuant to any bond act for the purposes of agricultural land preservation programs established pursuant to section 22-26cc or 22-26jj of the general statutes, but not allocated by the State Bond Commission, said commission shall vote on whether to authorize the issuance of at least five million dollars of such bonds for the purposes described in said sections at each of said commission's regularly scheduled meetings occurring in August and February of each year. If no meeting is held in said months, said commission shall vote on whether to authorize the issuance of such bonds at its next regularly scheduled meeting. To the extent there is a sufficient balance of bonds so approved by the General Assembly and there are pending agricultural land preservation transactions in excess of five million dollars, the Commissioner of Agriculture may request, and the State Bond Commission shall vote on whether to authorize the issuance of, bonds in excess of five million dollars. To the extent the balance of bonds so approved by the legislature is below five million dollars at the time of said commission's August or February meetings, said commission shall vote on whether to authorize the issuance of the remaining balance of such bonds.

Approved June 25, 2007